

News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

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Contact: Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

Graduation rates increase

MADISON — Wisconsin's graduation rates increased between the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years, ensuring the state's near, if not top, ranking in the nation for the percentage of students who successfully complete high school.

"This is good news for our students and our state," said State Superintendent Tony Evers. "The lifetime implications of leaving high school before graduation are a litany of lost opportunities. We want every student to leave high school ready for college and careers."

The state's legacy graduation rate shows three years of steady progress. For the 2010-11 school year, Wisconsin had a legacy graduation rate of 90.5 percent, up six-tenths of a point from the previous year and 1.1 points from the 2008-09 school year. As measured by

| 2010-11 Graduation Report | | |
|--|---------------|----------------------|
| | Legacy | 4-Year Cohort |
| Total Expected to Complete High School | 70,880 | 70,376 |
| Regular Diploma (Graduates) | 64,136 | 61,202 |
| Graduation Rate | 90.5% | 87.0% |

the federal four-year cohort rate, Wisconsin had 61,202 graduates for the 2010-11 school year. The state's four-year cohort graduation rate of 87 percent is up 1.3 points from the 2009-10 school year. This is the second year Wisconsin is reporting graduation rates using the uniformly adopted four-year cohort formula required by the U.S. Department of Education.

Over one year, the four-year cohort graduation rate improved for all subgroups of students. Data show disparities in graduation rates by racial and ethnic groups as well as by economic status, disability, and English language proficiency. With federal changes to reporting categories for racial and ethnic groups for the 2010-11 school year, caution is advised in analysis of data for those student groups.

Both the legacy and four-year cohort graduation rates count students earning a regular high school diploma. The legacy graduation rate provides a snapshot of high school graduation and completion in a given year. The denominator of the formula counts all students who are expected to graduate that year, including students who graduate, drop out, reach maximum age, or earn other completion credentials. The four-year cohort rate counts only students who earn a regular diploma within four years of starting high school. As the Department of Public

(more)

Instruction moves to the federally required graduation rate formula, Wisconsin will provide a six-year cohort graduation rate along with the four-year cohort rate in the 2012-13 school year.

“Though the vast majority of students graduate between the ages of 17 and 19, there are some individuals who will need longer to complete high school,” Evers noted. “It takes perseverance, but that diploma is a key to future success. A high school diploma opens doors to two- and four-year college programs, technical training, and careers.”

State students are entitled to a free appropriate public education until the age of 20 under the Wisconsin Constitution. Additionally, Wisconsin law requires school districts to identify and serve students who may not graduate from high school. Statutes specify that students in grades five through 12 are “at risk” if they have poor school attendance, low academic achievement, problems with high school credit accumulation, or other issues. These students, along with those who have already dropped out, usually need additional services to support their successful completion of high school. Research has shown that students who do not graduate from high school have lower lifetime earnings and are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, or incarcerated.

“Most school districts have a variety of opportunities or alternative programs to help at-risk students succeed,” Evers said. “However, budget cuts are real barriers to helping our students succeed. For our children and our state, we must unite around the importance of education and make a bipartisan investment in our kids’ future.”

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NOTE: The Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sig/index.html> has graduation information for the state’s public and charter high schools. Click on “Data Analysis,” then select the school or school district and click on “How are students performing academically?” and “What are high school completion rates?” This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_66.pdf.

Wisconsin Graduation Rates Statewide by Student Group

| | Legacy Rate | | | 4-Year Cohort Rate | | |
|---|-------------|---------|---------|--------------------|---------|---------------|
| | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 1-Year Change |
| All Students | 89.4% | 89.9% | 90.5% | 85.7% | 87.0% | 1.3 |
| American Indian / Alaska Native | 76.3% | 78.5% | 77.4% | 67.7% | 71.7% | 4.0 |
| Asian * | 90.3% | 91.3% | 93.7% | 83.4% | 88.4% | 5.0 |
| Black or African American | 66.4% | 67.0% | 69.7% | 60.5% | 63.8% | 3.3 |
| Hispanic / Latino | 76.7% | 77.4% | 80.7% | 69.0% | 72.0% | 3.0 |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | -- | -- | 85.0% | -- | 82.5% | -- |
| White, Not Hispanic | 93.4% | 94.1% | 94.1% | 90.7% | 91.4% | 0.7 |
| Two or More Races | -- | -- | 96.5% | -- | 85.7% | -- |
| Female | 91.5% | 91.7% | 92.2% | 88.1% | 89.4% | 1.3 |
| Males | 87.4% | 88.2% | 88.8% | 83.3% | 84.7% | 1.4 |
| With Disabilities | 79.3% | 79.8% | 80.7% | 64.6% | 67.1% | 2.5 |
| Without Disabilities | 90.7% | 91.2% | 91.8% | 88.6% | 89.8% | 1.2 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 80.3% | 81.7% | 82.3% | 71.7% | 74.1% | 2.4 |
| Not Economically Disadvantaged | 91.9% | 92.6% | 93.5% | 90.6% | 91.9% | 1.3 |
| English-Language Learners | 79.1% | 76.3% | 79.1% | 65.1% | 66.0% | 0.9 |
| English Proficient | 89.7% | 90.3% | 90.8% | 86.3% | 87.6% | 1.3 |

* Also included Pacific Islander through 2009-10.

NOTE: Due to 2010-11 race and ethnicity reporting changes, pre- and post 2010-11 completion rates by race and ethnicity may not be comparable.

Definitions: Both the legacy rate and the four-year adjusted cohort rate count only students earning a regular diploma in the numerator of the formula. The adjusted cohort rate refines that group by only including those students who earn a regular diploma within four years (which includes the summer following the fourth year). The denominator counts all students in the adjusted cohort. Wisconsin's legacy rate is not cohort based; it instead provides a snapshot of high school graduation and completion in a given year. The denominator counts all students expected to graduate that year, including students who graduate, drop-out, reach maximum age, or earn other completion credentials.